

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR NP

SUBJ: PANCHAYAT CONVENTION DEFENDS NATIONAL
INTEGRITY

REF: KATHMANDU 3353

1. UNDER SPONSORSHIP OF THE "GAUN PHARKA" (BACK TO THE VILLAGE) NATIONAL COMMITTEE, A MEETING OF SEVERAL HUNDRED PANCHAYAT OFFICIALS FOR ALL OVER THE COUNTRY WAS HELD IN KATHMANDU DURING THE PAST WEEK. (SUCH MEETINGS HAVE OCCURRED BEFORE AT THE ZONAL LEVEL, BUT THIS IS NATIONAL LEVEL ASSEMBLAGE OF LOCAL PANCHAYAT WORKERS.) THE MEETING WAS ADDRESSED BY THE KING AND OTHER SENIOR POLITICAL FIGURES. FOR THE MOST PART, THE CONFERENCE CONSISTED SIMPLY OF THE STANDARD RHETORIC EXTOLLING THE VIRTURES OF THE PARTYLESS PANCHAYAT SYSTEM, EXHORTING THE PANCHAYAT WORKERS TO SET A SHINING EXAMPLE OF HONESTY AND DEDICATION, AND EMPHASIZING THE ROLE OF THE KING AS LEADER AND EMBODIMENT OF THE NATION.

2. HOWEVER, AMONG THE SEVERAL RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE END OF THE CONFERENCE, TWO IN PARTICULAR STOOD OUT AS REFLECTING PARTICULAR CURRENT POLITICAL SORE SPOTS. ONE WAS A CALL FOR EXPOSURE OF "THE REACTIONAIRES WHO IN THE NAME OF RELIGION ENGAGED IN ANTINATIONAL ACTIVITIES." THIS

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IS AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO THE PASHUPATINATH AFFAIR"

(REFTEL), AND IS PARTICULARLY NOTABLE FOR BEING THE FIRST PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE INCIDENT. ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY OF THOSE ORIGINALLY ARRESTED WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED, A SMALL CORE OF KEY FIGURES, INCLUDING A PROMINENT INDIAN RISHI WHOSE NORMAL ABOODE WAS AT PASHUPATINATH, ARE STILL BEING HELD. SENIOR NEPALESE POLICE OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO APPEAR QUITE PERTURBED ABOUT THE AFFAIR, AT LEAST IN PART BECAUSE OF GROWING EVIDENCE THAT INDIAN INTELLIGENCE WAS DIRECTLY INVOLVED.

3. THE OTHER RESOLUTION OF SOME INTEREST "SEVERELY DENOUNCED THE HANDFUL OF RENEGADES WHO IN A SINISTER BID TO DEMORALIZE THE DUTIFUL AND HONEST EX-SERVICEMAN INSTIGATE THEM TO ANTI-NATIONAL ACTIVITIES...." EX-GURKHAS, WITH THEIR GREATER EXPOSURE IDEAS, AND THE PALACE HAS SHOWN A PERENNIAL SENSITIVITY TO REAL OR IMAGINED ATTEMPTS TO EXPLOIT THIS GROUP.

WE DO KNOW THE GOVERNMENT HAS ENCOURAGED EX-SERVICEMAN, BRITISH INDIAN AND NEPALESE ARMY, TO SETTLE ON LAND IN THE TERAI CLOSE TO INDIAN. B.P. KOIRALA DID EXPLOIT EX-SERVICEMEN IN THE OKHALDHUNGA INCIDENT OF DECEMBER 1974. OTHERS HAVE TAKEN ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE OF EXSERVICEMEN LIVING IN THE TERAI AND THEY ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO EXPLOITATION. WHETHER OR NOT SOME RECENT INCIDENT WAS THE STIMULUS FOR THE ABOVE RESOLUTION IS NOT CLEAR.

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